| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| State of Sikkim | 25.6.2003 09.09.2003* | Refund mechanism for new and expanded units | Units set up or expanded after 24.12.1997 can avail the exemption | Sun-set date is 31.3.2007 |
| Kutchh District of Gujarat | 31.07.2001 | Refund mechanism for new units only | Units set up on or after 31.7.2001 | Last date for setting up of new units is 31.12.2005 |
| Sate of Jammu & Kashmir | 14.11.2002 | Refund mechanism new and expanded units | Units set up or expanded after 14.6.2002 can avail the exemption | No time limit |
| State of Uttarakhand | 10.06.2003 | Out right exemption new and expanded units | Units set up or expanded after 07.01.2003 can avail the exemption | Sun set date is 31.3.2010 |
| State of Himachal Pradesh | 10.06.2003 | Out right exemption new and expanded units | Units set up or expanded after 07.01.2003 can avail the exemption | Sun set date is 31.3.2010 |

*With the announcement of the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy, 2007 (NEIIPP, 2007), another excise duty exemption scheme has been notified for the North East Region (including Sikkim). Units set up/expanded on or after 1.4.2007 can avail this new exemption. This scheme is valid for a period of ten years, from 2007 to 2017 and this too operates as a refund scheme.

NOTE:

1. The exemptions are available for a period of ten years from the date of start of commercial production except in case of Kutchh where the exemption is for a period of five years.
2. Except is case of Kutchh, exemption is also valid for existing units, which undertake substantial expansion by increasing their installed capacity by 25% or more. In case of J&K exemption would also be available to existing units, which make new investment resulting in additional employment of 25% or more, over the base employment (maximum number of regular employees employed at any point of time over last five years).

**Charges for Using Credit Card**

1918. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that private banks, in particular, are collecting huge sum of money by force from their customers who have credit card facility under various charges like late pay fee, surcharge, premium charge, tax, interest on purchase, etc.; and

(b) if so, what are the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) As per Master Circular on Credit Card operations dated 2nd July, 2007 issued by Reserve bank of India (RBI), credit card dues are in the nature of non-priority sector personal loans and as such banks are free to determine the rate of interest on credit card dues without reference to their Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR). However, RBI has advised the banks that the annualized percentage rate (APR), the method of calculation of APR, late payment charges including the method of calculation, the manner in which the outstanding unpaid amount is to be included for calculation of interest, etc. on credit card dues should be indicated by card issuing banks in the 'Welcome

Kit' and monthly statements. Banks have also been advised not to levy any charge that was not explicitly indicated to the cardholder at the time of issue of card and without obtaining consent of the cardholder.

In order to ensure transparency in banking services, RBI has also issued instructions to banks to display and update the details of various service charges in the prescribed format on their websites and in their offices/branches. While fixing the service charges, the banks are expected to ensure that the charges are reasonable, consistent with the cost of providing the services and the the customers with low value/volume of transactions are not penalized. RBI has also advised the banks to make provision on their web-sites for online registration of customers' complaints. Further, the scope of the Banking Ombudsman Scheme has been enlarged to cover complaints of the banks' customers concerning credit cards, service charges, delays in delivery of bank services, etc.

**Granting of Educational Loans**

1919. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether all banks including private banks are adhering to norms fixed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding grant of educational and agriculture loans;

(b) the details of total amount disbursed by the Banks including private banks for educational loan in Tamil Nadu for the last three years; and

(c) the details of the number of educational loan application rejected by the banks including private banks in Tamil Nadu for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) All Scheduled Commercial banks, both in the public and private sector are required to adhere to norms fixed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding grant of educational and agriculture loans under the priority sector guidelines.

(b) According to the RBI, the amount of education loans outstanding for all Scheduled Commercial Banks, including private sector banks during the last three years in the State of Tamil Nadu is given below:

(Amount in Rs. crore)

| As on 31st March | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| 1001 | 1859 | 2363 |

(c) The RBI has reported that details of educational loan applications rejected in Tamil Nadu are not available.

**Excise duties evasion by Pharma Companies**

1920. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has ordered a probe into Excise duties evasion by some Pharma companies; and